

Information Guide



Environment Policy

A guide to the European Union's Environment Policy, with hyperlinks to sources of information within European Sources Online and on external websites

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Introduction

Over the past 40 years, a broad range of environmental legislation has been put in place, adding up to the most comprehensive modern standards in the world. This has helped to address some of the most serious environmental concerns of citizens and businesses in the Union. Emissions of pollutants to air, water and soil have been reduced significantly over the past decades, as have greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in recent years. EU chemicals legislation has been modernised and the use of many toxic or hazardous substances such as lead, cadmium and mercury has been restricted in products found in most households. EU citizens enjoy some of the best water quality in the world, and over 18% of the EU's territory and 4 % of its seas have been designated as protected areas for nature.

However, many environmental trends in the EU remain worrying, not least due to insufficient implementation of existing EU environment legislation. Only 17% of species and habitats assessed under the Habitats Directive²² are in good status, and the degradation and loss of natural capital is jeopardising efforts to attain the EU's biodiversity and climate change objectives. This has high associated costs which have not yet been properly valued in our economic or social system. 30% of the EU's territory is highly fragmented, affecting the connectivity and health of ecosystems and their ability to provide services as well as viable habitats for species.

To live well in the future, urgent, concerted action should be taken now to improve ecological resilience and maximise the benefits environment policy can deliver for the economy and society, while respecting the planet's ecological limits.

(For this reason) the Union has set the objective to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive green economy that secures growth and development, safeguards human health and well-being, provides decent jobs, reduces inequalities and invests in and preserves natural capital.

From: [The Commission proposal for a new general Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 "Living well, within the limits of our planet"](#), 29 November 2012.

Background

It was in 1972, at a conference of European Heads of State, that the need for a common environmental policy was agreed. Articles dealing with the environment were added to the Treaty by the 1986 Single European Act (the current legal basis is Articles 191-193 of the [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#)). In preparation for the 2004 enlargement it was estimated that the environmental body of law or *acquis* comprised around 300 Directives and Regulations adopted under a series of Environment Action Programmes, which provide the framework for the legislation.

Despite this European action, damage to the environment has been growing steadily worse in recent decades. The quantity of waste produced increases by about 10% per year; CO₂ emissions from homes and vehicles are increasing; the quality of life, especially in urban areas has declined because of noise and pollution. Global warming and climate change continue to be one of the major challenges facing Europe and the world.

A report produced for the Dutch Presidency of the EU in the second half of 2004 by the Netherlands National Institute for Public Health in cooperation with European Environment Agency, [Outstanding Environmental Issues: a review of the EU's environmental agenda](#), concluded that:

EU policy has successfully reduced a number of pressures on the environment and led to economic investments that have benefited the health of people and ecosystems. But there are still considerable pressures on the European environment, with climate change, loss of biodiversity and air pollution in urban areas as major issues. If natural resources are to be preserved, they should be given a clear economic value - something requiring the involvement of EU policy-makers, who are best placed to take cost-effective action.

Currently, the most important issue is the extent to which the environmental part of the EU's 'Lisbon strategy' supports or threatens the economic and social aspects of this strategy. Although it is not easy to answer this explicitly, our analysis clearly shows that, rather than hampering economic development, European environmental policy to date has steered economic growth in a direction that is both clean and competitive.

All environment policy is based on the precautionary principle and that environmental damage should be rectified at source - the 'polluter pays' principle. The polluter may be required to pay through the investment needed to meet higher standards or by creating a system to take back, recycle or dispose of products after use. The payment may also be a tax on business or consumers for using an environmentally unfriendly product, such as some types of packaging.

The 2004 [Environmental Liability Directive](#) (2004/35/EC) entered into force on 30 April 2007. Only Italy, Latvia and Lithuania implemented it on time and by November 2008 only two thirds of the Member States had fully transposed its requirements into national law. The Directive was the first EU law specifically based on the 'polluter pays' principle. It covers damage to water resources, natural habitats, animals and plants, as well as contamination of land which causes significant harm to human health.

Legal basis

Included in the Preamble to the [Treaty on European Union](#) (TEU) is the statement that the signatories agreed to form the European Union because, amongst other things, they are:

Determined to promote economic and social progress for their peoples, taking into account the principle of sustainable development and within the context of the accomplishment of the internal market and of reinforced cohesion and environmental protection...

In the context of creating the internal market, Article 3(3) of the TEU states that the Union:

shall work for the sustainable development of Europe based on [...] a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment.

Article 21(2) commits the Union to developing international cooperation in order to:

(d) foster the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of developing countries, with the primary aim of eradicating poverty

and

(f) help develop international measures to preserve and improve the quality of the environment and the sustainable management of global natural resources, in order to ensure sustainable development.

In the [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#) (TFEU), Article 4 identifies environment as an area of shared competence between the EU and the Member States.

Article 11 states:

Environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Union's policies and activities, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.

Article 177 establishes the Cohesion Fund, to help finance projects in a number of fields, including the environment.

The main provisions on environment in the TFEU are set out in Articles 191-193 (Title XX). Article 191 reads:

1. Union policy on the environment shall contribute to pursuit of the following objectives:
 - preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment,
 - protecting human health,
 - prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources,
 - promoting measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, and in particular combating climate change.
2. Union policy on the environment shall aim at a high level of protection taking into account the diversity of situations in the various regions of the Union. It shall be based on the precautionary principle and on the principles that preventive action should be taken, that environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source and that the polluter should pay...
3. In preparing its policy on the environment, the Union shall take account of:
 - available scientific and technical data,
 - environmental conditions in the various regions of the Union,
 - the potential benefits and costs of action or lack of action,
 - the economic and social development of the Union as a whole and the balanced development of its regions.
4. Within their respective spheres of competence, the Union and the Member States shall cooperate with third countries and with the competent international organisations. The arrangements for Union cooperation may be the subject of agreements between the Union and the third parties concerned...

Article 192 confirms that environment legislation is to be adopted using the ordinary legislative procedure (i.e. involving the European Parliament and the Council as joint decision-makers, and with the involvement of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions).

An exception allows the Council, under a special legislative procedure, to adopt measures in a number of areas, including management of water resources and energy supply.

Article 192(3) provides for Parliament and Council to adopt environment action programmes; 192(4) requires the Member States to finance and implement EU environment policy; 192(5) concerns payment of costs under the 'polluter pays' principle.

Under Article 193, Member States may, if they wish, introduce or maintain more stringent environmental measures than those set out in the Treaty.

European Commission

The main role of the European Commission's [Directorate-General for the Environment](#) is to: initiate and define new environment policy and legislation, to promote integration of environmental concerns into other policy areas, and to ensure that agreed policy measures are implemented effectively in the EU Member States. It achieves this through defining policy objectives, implementing environmental action programmes and drawing up proposals for legislation to address specific issues within its main policy areas of:

- [Air](#)
- [Chemicals](#)
- [Industry](#)
- [International Issues](#)
- Land Use ([Coastal Zone Policy](#), [Urban Environment](#), [Environmental Assessment](#))
- [Nature and Biodiversity](#)
- [Noise](#)
- [Soil](#)
- [Sustainable Development](#)
- [Waste](#)
- [Water](#)

Climate change was included in the remit of DG Environment, but in February 2010 a separate [Directorate-General for Climate Action](#) was created. Its responsibilities include international negotiations on climate and helping the EU to deal with the consequences of climate change and to meet its 2020 targets.

Both national governments and the European Commission are required to carry out environmental impact assessments but while the Union pursues an active policy of environmental protection, the subsidiarity principle requires the Commission to tackle only those problems which can be dealt with more effectively at European than at national or regional level. Legislation is set out in [Directive 85/337/EEC](#) (the Environmental Impact Assessment - or EIA - Directive; see [Environmental Assessment](#) page). In July 2010, the Commission launched a public consultation on the EIA Directive (see Press Release [IP/10/901](#)). On 20 December 2010, Environment Ministers adopted [Conclusions](#) on 'Improving environmental policy instruments'. Amongst other things, the Council invited the Commission to explore the options for strengthening the effectiveness of the EIA Directive.

On 13 December 2011, a codified version of the Directive and the three revisions to it was adopted as [Directive 2011/92/EU](#). The new legislation entered into force on 17 February 2012 (see also Press Release [IP/12/145](#)).

The main priorities until 2012 were outlined in the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme (6EAP, established by [Decision 1600/2002/EC](#); see also [6EAP website](#)). After which date, a new Environment Action Programme was proposed for the EU. Entitled 'Living well, within the limits of our planet', the Seventh Community Environment Action Programme ([7EAP website](#)) will guide environment policy up to 2020 once it is considered through the ordinary legislative procedure. More details of the annual legislative and work programme are given in the Environment DG's Annual Management Plan (see [2013](#), [2012](#), [2011](#), [2010](#), [2009](#), [2008](#), [2007](#), [2006](#)).

Implementation of EU environmental legislation in the Member States remains a problem. In the Communication 'Towards a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS)', published on 5 February 2008 as [COM\(2008\)46](#), the Commission made proposals for improving, modernising and streamlining the system for collecting, analysing and reporting environmental information (see also Press Release [IP/08/185](#)). Once established, [SEIS](#) became a collaborative initiative between the Commission, the

European Environment Agency (EEA) and the European Environmental Information and Observation Network (EIONET). In November 2011, the [NESIS](#) network was launched to enhance SEIS and help public authorities address the problems of providing information and reporting environmental issues. Furthermore, on 25 January 2013, the Commission launched the '[EU Shared Environmental Information System – Implementation Outlook](#)' [archived] to identify existing faults in the quality and flow of the environment data and information and stimulate advancement towards a more efficient system.

On 18 November 2008, the Commission published its 25th Report on monitoring the application of Community law ([COM\(2008\)777](#)). The section on environment noted that:

The acquis on environment law is broad and ambitious, applies to widely diverse situations in Member States, is administered by many different government agencies acting at different levels and gives rise to a high level of public interest. Many problems are due to late and incorrect transposition of directives, the former accounting for 125 new infringement actions during 2007. [...] Efforts have been made to simplify and modernise long standing laws for waste, water, air and industrial emissions, to help Member States respond to problems of application.

(Other [Annual reports on national implementation of EU law](#) are available; between 1996 and 2005, annual reports were issued specifically on the [Implementation of Environmental law](#)).

Also on 18 November 2008, the Commission issued a Communication 'on implementing European Community Environmental Law' ([COM\(2008\)773](#)), intended 'to show how the new approaches set out in the Communication 'A Europe of Results - Applying EU Law' ([COM\(2007\)502](#)) will be applied in the area of environment.' The Communication outlined challenges in applying environmental law in the EU and methods of promoting and achieving compliance, stressing 'the need for close cooperation with Member States to ensure that national implementing rules are correct and adopted on time, and that shared goals are effectively achieved' (Press Release [IP/08/1726](#)).

On 20 November 2009, the Commission adopted a Report on implementation of EU waste legislation for the period 2004-2006 ([COM\(2009\)633](#)), covering: Directive 2006/12/EC on waste; Directive 91/689/EEC on hazardous waste; Directive 75/439/EEC on waste oils; Directive 86/278/EEC on sewage sludge; Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste; Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste; Directive 2002/96/EC on waste electrical and electronic equipment.

In its role of monitoring the application of EU law, the European Commission frequently takes legal proceedings against Member States for failing to implement or correctly apply environmental legislation. Where the Commission believes an infringement procedure is warranted, it sends a first written warning to the Member State concerned, in the form of a 'Letter of Formal Notice'. Depending on the response of the Member State, proceedings can result in significant fines. Details of proposed actions, outcomes and of the legal process are usually given in press releases (see for example [IP/11/596](#) 19 May 2011, 'Commission takes France to court over failure to comply with EU air quality rules'; [IP/11/732](#) 16 June 2011, 'Commission urges Sweden to respect EU nature legislation and protect endangered wolves'; [IP/11/730](#) 16 June 2011, 'Commission urges Ireland to act swiftly to improve protection of peat bogs'; [IP/11/729](#) 16 June 2011, 'Commission takes Spain to Court over urban waste water and river basin plans'; [IP/12/538](#) 31 May 2012, 'Commission urges Italy to ensure adequate pre-treatment of waste landfilled in Rome'; [IP/12/540](#) 31 May 2012, 'Commission urges Romania and Slovakia to comply with EU legislation on end-of-life vehicles'; [IP/13/576](#) 20 June 2013, 'Commission takes Greece to Court over nitrate pollution').

Action is often announced against a number of Member States at once, for the same breach of their obligations, as on 16 June 2011, when the Commission asked five Member States to comply with the EU waste framework directive (Press Release [IP/11/724](#)) and called on 12 Member States to implement EU rules on environmental crime ([IP/11/739](#); other press releases detailing infringement cases can be found on the [Rapid database](#) - choose 'search', select the dates required and use appropriate keywords - or browse the pre-set list of press releases on [Environment](#)).

The European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law ([IMPEL](#)) is an informal network of European environmental inspectors and policymakers concerned with the implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation. The network currently has 30+ members, including all EU Member States, as well as Turkey and Norway.

In its 7 March 2012 Communication 'Improving the delivery of benefits from EU environment measures: building confidence through better knowledge and responsiveness' ([COM\(2012\)95](#)) the Commission stated:

With the exception of soil, our environment is already the subject of extensive EU environment legislation, much of it long-established, so the main challenge is now one of effective implementation.

Two issues stand out: the extent of our knowledge about the state of the environment and how it is safeguarded; and effective ways of dealing with problems on the ground.

In that context, the Communication set out ideas aimed at providing Member States with better tools for improving implementation on the ground. The Commission intended responses to the Communication to feed into preparations for the 7EAP (see also Press Releases [IP/12/220](#) and [MEMO/12/159](#)).

Environmental Action Programmes

Since 1972 there have been six environmental action programmes. The first covered the years 1973-1976. The [Fifth Environmental Action Programme \[archived\]](#) ('Towards sustainability'), which covered the period 1993-2000, established the principle of a European strategy of voluntary action and marked the beginning of a 'horizontal' Community approach which would take account of all causes of pollution: industry, energy, tourism, agriculture and transport.

The Sixth Community Environment Action Programme (6EAP) was established by [Decision 1600/2002/EC](#) (on the basis of [COM\(2001\)31](#); see also [Summaries of EU legislation](#)). The 6EAP covers the period 2001-2012 and identifies four areas where more action is urgently needed: climate change, nature and biodiversity, environment and health, sustainable use of natural resources and waste. The [Sixth Environmental Action Programme](#) ('Environment 2010: Our future, our choice') covers the period 2001-2010 and identified four areas where more action is urgently needed:

- Climate change
- Nature and bio-diversity
- The environment and health
- Sustainable use of natural resources and waste.

Stavros Dimas, who was then the European Environment Commissioner, outlined in a [speech](#) in January 2005 his hope to complete strategies to deal with seven key areas for concern:

- Air pollution
- Waste recycling
- Management of resources (encouragement of new technologies)
- Soil protection
- Urban environment
- Sustainable use of pesticides
- Marine environment.

The Commission adopted its 'Mid-term review of the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme' on 30 April 2007 as [COM\(2007\)225](#). The Communication looked at progress since 2002 and at the challenges until 2012, and concluded that the EU is on track with adopting the policy measures outlined in the Programme. It also committed the European Commission to actions in a number of broad areas: international co-operation, 'Better Regulation' principles in environmental policy-making, policy integration, and improved implementation and enforcement.

The Annual Environment Policy Review (EPR) looks at recent environmental trends and policy developments at EU and national level and at progress towards the Union's key environmental goals under the 6th Environment Action Programme. Introducing the 2007 EPR ([COM\(2008\)409](#); also available in an [illustrated version](#)), adopted on 2 July 2008, Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said: '2007 was a turning point in EU environment policy. The main commitments under the 6th Environment Action Programme have been delivered. Environment issues are now firmly at the top of the political agenda, and command the attention of decision-makers, the media and the public' (see also Press Release [IP/08/1082](#) and [Summaries of EU legislation](#)).

The 2008 EPR ([COM\(2009\)304](#)) highlighted major policy achievements in 2008, including the adoption of the EU's climate and energy package. The 2009 EPR looks at EU policy developments under the priorities of the 6th Environment Action Programme (climate change, nature and biodiversity, environment and health, and natural resources and waste) and summarises policy initiatives in the Member States (see Press Release [IP/10/1047](#) and [Annual Environment Policy Review](#) [archived] page).

The final assessment of the 6EAP was adopted by the Commission on 31 August 2011 as [COM\(2011\)531](#) (see also Press Release [IP/11/996](#)). Claiming that most of the actions set out in the Programme have been, or will be, completed, the report highlighted a number of achievements in EU environment policy over the past 10 years, including: the extension of the Natura 2000 network, the introduction of a comprehensive chemicals policy, and action on climate change. Whilst noting that the Programme provided an overarching framework for environment policy, the assessment expressed concern that:

The ten-year timeframe of the 6th EAP was not always appropriate. It proved long enough to cover policy formulation, adoption and the early stages of implementation in some areas (e.g. waste). In others (e.g. resources, biodiversity) it proved to be too short because of the need for more information or because of other obstacles. Lastly, in terms of financing, while the 6th EAP influenced the 2007-2013 multi-annual financial framework, the timing of its adoption in 2002 was too late for the period 2000-2007.

The 6EAP expired on 22 July 2012. On 10 October 2011, the Council adopted [Conclusions](#) on the assessment and invited the Commission to present a proposal for a 7th Environment Action Programme (7EAP) by January 2012.

A public consultation on the proposed 7EAP was launched on 30 March 2012, with a deadline of 1 June (see Press Release [IP/12/334](#) and [Towards a new EAP](#) page).

On 11 June 2012, the Council adopted [Conclusions](#) 'on setting the framework for a Seventh EU Environment Action Programme', setting out a 'Vision for 2050 and objectives for 2020'. Ministers called for the 7EAP to be:

an overarching strategic framework for the environment setting the course for achieving an ambitious and compelling 2050 vision for a green Europe including an inclusive, green and competitive European economy safeguarding the environment and health for present and future generations.

In November 2012, the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 was finally published by the Commission (see [COM\(2012\)710](#) and Press Release [IP/12/1271](#)). Said proposal, established that, unlike its predecessors, which were implemented for a ten year period, the Seventh Environment Action Programme ('Living well, within the limits of the planet') will cover the timeframe 2014-2020 in order to coordinate its implementation with the multi-annual financial framework of the same period and the [Europe 2020 Strategy](#), amongst other policies (see [MEMO/12/908](#)).

The nine priorities of the 7EAP will be to:

- Protect nature and strengthen ecological resilience
- Boost sustainable resource-efficient low-carbon growth
- Effectively address environment-related threats to health
- Promote better implementation of EU environment law
- Ensure that policies benefit from state of the art science
- Secure the necessary investments in support of environment and climate change policy
- Improve the way environmental concerns and requirements are reflected in other policies
- Enhance the sustainability of EU cities
- Improve the EU's effectiveness in addressing regional and global challenges related to the environment and climate change

European Environment Commissioner, Janez Potočnik, stated in a [speech](#) in December 2012 that the proposed 7EAP should achieve an inclusive green economy, whilst protecting the natural capital of Europe and the health of its citizens. Furthermore, he expressed the programme's intention to improve on the following issues:

- European waters protection
- Improvement of forest policy
- Marine litter reduction
- Waste recycling
- Update of air quality, noise and water legislation
- Chemicals and nanomaterials concerns

On 19 June 2013, the European Parliament and the Council reached a political agreement on the new environmental programme which was welcomed by the European Environment Commissioner, Janez Potočnik, and the Climate Action Commissioner, Connie Hedegaard ([MEMO/13/591](#)).

LIFE

Created in 1992, LIFE is the Union's financial instrument for the environment. LIFE III spanned 2000-2006 and helped fund environmental initiatives under three main headings: Life-Nature, Life-Environment and Life-Third Countries. A new initiative, [LIFE+](#), was adopted in May 2007 as [Regulation 614/2007](#). It will fund a wide range of environmental programmes over the period 2007-2013, and has three components:

- LIFE+ Nature & Biodiversity
- LIFE+ Environment Policy & Governance
- LIFE+ Information & Communication.

It was announced on 27 October 2008 that the Commission had approved funding for 143 new projects under the first call for the LIFE+ programme (2007-2013), providing €186 million of a total investment of €367 million (Press Release [IP/08/1588](#)). LIFE+ is one of a number of [Funding Opportunities](#) available through the Commission's Environment DG, the others being the Civil Protection Financial Instrument, the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme - Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (CIP-EIP), and operating grants to environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

On 29 October 2009, the Commission announced it had approved €207.5 million EU funding for 196 new LIFE+ projects (Press Release [IP/09/1646](#)). A further €250 million was approved in July 2010, to fund 210 projects ([IP/10/1002](#)), €244 million were approved in July 2011 to support 183 projects ([IP/11/902](#) and [MEMO/11/524](#)) and €268.4 million more were approved in July 2012 for 202 projects ([IP/12/812](#)), less than a month after 21 May 2012 marked the 20th anniversary of [Regulation \(EC\) 1655/2000](#) - the first LIFE Regulation (see [LIFE 20 years: toolkit](#)). At the beginning of July 2013 the European Commission declared that it was investing €281.4 million in 248 new environment and climate projects ([IP/13/643](#)).

A Proposal for a Regulation 'on the establishment of a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE)' was adopted by the Commission on 12 December 2011 as [COM\(2011\)874](#) (see Press Releases [IP/11/1526](#) and [MEMO/11/893](#); check progress via PreLex dossier and the [Continuation of LIFE+ beyond 2013 website](#)). Intended to span 2014-2020, the new LIFE Programme aims to build on LIFE+ but also to be simpler and more flexible. If adopted, the new Regulation would create two sub-programmes: 'Environment' (comprising 'Environment and Resource Efficiency', 'Biodiversity', and 'Environmental Governance and Information') and 'Climate Action' ('Climate Change Mitigation', 'Climate Change Adaptation', and 'Climate Governance and Information').

Environmental integration

Since 1998, the Community's institutions have been obliged to take consideration of environmental implications in the decisions and activities of other sectors. This is known as [environmental integration](#) and became a priority in the EU's 5th Environmental Action Programme in response to issues raised at the Earth summit in Rio in 1992. Since 1997, it has been a prerequisite that:

Environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Union's policies and activities, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.

That provision was introduced by Article 6 of the [Treaty establishing the European Community](#) and is now set out in Article 11 of the [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#).

The [Environmental Integration](#) page provides links to the following areas where integration strategies have been formulated: Agriculture, Cohesion Policy, Development, Economic and Financial Affairs, Economic Recovery Plan, Employment, Energy, Enterprise, Fisheries, Internal Market, Research, Trade and External Relations, and Transport.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development refers to the effort to ensure that economic growth takes place in a way that can continue in the future, without exhausting resources or harming any section of society.

The [Treaty of Amsterdam](#) established the principle of sustainable development as one of the EU's main objectives and also explicitly mentioned the need for protection of the environment to be integrated into all Community policies, especially transport, energy and agriculture. The June 2001 [Gothenburg European Council](#) adopted the Commission's proposal ([COM\(2001\)264](#); see also Press Release [IP/01/710](#)) for a European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development, setting out long-term objectives especially concerning climate change, transport, health and natural resources.

The March 2005 European Council considered the issue of sustainable development, reaffirming 'that the Lisbon Strategy itself is to be seen in the wider context of the sustainable development requirement that present needs be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' and agreeing to adopt a declaration on guiding principles for sustainable development at its June 2005 summit (see Presidency Conclusions [March 2005](#) Section III, page 14 and [June 2005](#) Annex I).

In December 2005, the Commission adopted a Communication 'On the review of the Sustainable Development Strategy: A platform for action' ([COM\(2005\)658](#)) and the June 2006 European Council subsequently adopted 'an ambitious and comprehensive renewed EU Strategy for Sustainable Development' (see [Presidency Conclusions](#) and Council document [10917/06](#) of 26 June 2006).

On 22 October 2007, the Commission adopted the 'Progress Report on the Sustainable Development Strategy 2007' ([COM\(2007\)642](#)) which found that 'progress on the ground is modest but that policy development at both EU and MS level has progressed significantly in many areas, notably on climate change and clean energy.' The report was welcomed by the December 2007 European Council, which confirmed that the focus should be on implementation and invited the Commission 'to present a roadmap together with its next Progress Report in June 2009 on the SDS setting out the remaining actions to be implemented with highest priority' (see [Presidency Conclusions](#)).

The Commission's 24 July 2009 Communication 'Mainstreaming sustainable development into EU policies: 2009 Review of the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development' ([COM\(2009\)400](#)) concluded that, 'despite considerable efforts to include action for sustainable development in major EU policy areas, unsustainable trends persist and the EU still needs to intensify its efforts' (see also Press Release [IP/09/1188](#), the Commission's [Sustainable Development](#) page, and [Summaries of EU legislation](#) pages).

The Green Paper 'On Forest Protection and Information in the EU: Preparing forests for climate change' was adopted by the Commission on 1 March 2010 as [COM\(2010\)66](#) (see also Press Release [IP/10/207](#)). On 15 June 2011, to mark the International Year of Forests, Eurostat published [Forestry in the EU and the world](#). The publication shows that forests cover some 40% of the EU land area, that the EU accounts for just 4% of the world's total forest area, and that wood comprises 50% of the Union's consumption of renewable energy.

On 26 January 2011, the Commission adopted the Communication 'A resource-efficient Europe - Flagship initiative under the Europe 2020 Strategy' ([COM\(2011\)21](#); see also Press Releases [IP/11/63](#) and [MEMO/11/43](#), and [A resource-efficient Europe](#) page). The last of seven [Europe 2020](#) flagship initiatives, it establishes resource efficiency as the guiding principle for EU policies on energy, transport, climate change, industry, commodities, agriculture, fisheries, biodiversity and regional development.

The Communication 'Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe' was adopted on 20 September 2011 as [COM\(2011\)571](#) (see also Press Release [MEMO/11/614](#)). It set out how the EU should respond to the call in 'A Resource Efficient Europe' for the creation of a framework to promote resource efficiency across policy areas. Outlining a competitiveness and growth plan for 2050 based on the sustainable use of natural resources, the Roadmap identified key resources requiring efficient management (water, clean air, ecosystem services, healthy soils and marine resources) and three key sectors to be addressed: food and food waste, buildings and housing, and transport and mobility.

As part of a review of the Union's Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) policies, a public consultation was launched on 1 February 2012 (see Press Release [IP/12/92](#)), seeking views on four specific areas: product design, recycling and waste management; green public procurement; the environmental performance of products; and the environmental performance of organisations.

On 13 February 2012, the Commission adopted the Communication 'Innovating for Sustainable Growth: A Bioeconomy for Europe' ([COM\(2012\)60](#); see also Press Releases [IP/12/124](#) and [MEMO/12/97](#)). The Communication stated:

The Bioeconomy Strategy and its Action Plan aim to pave the way to a more innovative, resource efficient and competitive society that reconciles food security with the sustainable use of renewable resources for industrial purposes, while ensuring environmental protection. They will inform research and innovation agendas in bioeconomy sectors and contribute to a more coherent policy environment, better interrelations between national, EU and global bioeconomy policies and a more engaged public dialogue. They will seek synergies and respect complementarities with other policy areas, instruments and funding sources, which share and address the same objectives, such as the Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies (CAP and CFP), the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), environmental, industrial, employment, energy and health policies.

5 June 2012 saw the launch of the [European Resource Efficiency Platform \(EREP\)](#) (see Press Release [IP/12/564](#)) and its first plenary meeting. Made of 33 members – which include European Commissioners, representatives of the European Parliament and member states, business CEOs, academia and representatives of NGOs and civil society amongst others – the Platform aims to:

- provide high-level guidance and advice to the European Commission, Members States and private actors on policy measures designed to transform the European economy towards a more sustainable growth path
- determine how to achieve the milestones and the vision set out in the Commission's Roadmap to a resource-efficient Europe
- propose indicators and targets for resource efficiency as guiding tools for economic policy-making in view of the mid/term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy
- contribute to improving co-ordination across sectors and help create common awareness on resource efficiency

A month afterwards, on 10 July 2012, the first two, out of three, Working Groups (WG) gathered to discuss the [circular economy and the greening of the economy](#) and how to [set objectives and measure progress](#). A day afterwards, the last group met to debate over [framework conditions for investments in resource efficiency](#). These reports were handed over to the sherpas (delegates representing the platform members) who met on 22 November 2012 to identify the priorities highlighted on them and produce a working document for the Platform's second plenary meeting (see '[Recommendations for short-term priorities](#)'). On 14 December 2012, after hearing the reports of the WG and

debating in small discussion groups and in plenary, the members of the EREP agreed on a 'Manifesto for a resource-efficient Europe' (see [MEMO/12/989](#)) that addressed the necessity for a transition to a more circular and resource-efficient economy and society as means to overcome the current crisis and reindustrialise the European economy. The document also ended with the compromise of the EREP to reunite again in June 2013 to issue a set of short term policy guidelines. During the third plenary meeting on 17 June 2013, the Platform adopted the '[Action for a resource efficient Europe](#)', a series of recommendations designed to:

- create growth and jobs
- provide incentives to overcome barriers to improving resource efficiency
- put an adequate value on resources
- provide clear information and measure progress
- promote new business models.

The next meeting of EREP is scheduled for 28 November 2013.

Biodiversity

The 1998 Communication 'on a European Community Biodiversity Strategy' ([COM\(1998\)42](#), text via Archive of European Integration) set out a framework for developing Community policies and instruments in order to comply with the United Nations [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (see [Summaries of EU legislation](#)).

The 2001 Communication 'A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development' ([COM\(2001\)264](#)) set the EU a target date of 2010 for halting biodiversity loss. Despite the 2006 Action Plan set out in the May 2006 Communication 'Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond' ([COM\(2006\)216](#)) the Union 'is highly unlikely to meet its 2010 target of halting biodiversity decline' according to a mid-term assessment ([COM\(2008\)864](#); see also Press Release [IP/08/1988](#), [EU Biodiversity Action Plan Report 2008](#), and [Biodiversity 2006 Communication and Action Plan](#)).

Speaking on 11 February 2009 ([SPEECH/09/54](#)) on the theme of meeting the 2010 target, Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said:

Halting the loss of biodiversity is one of the great challenges of our time. A lot of good work has been done, but it seems that we will miss our 2010 target and we are fully aware that we 'must do considerably better'.

Also on the theme of biodiversity policy beyond 2010, a Commission conference held in Athens on 27-28 April 2009 agreed an eight-point plan for nature protection (see [The message from Athens](#); a related Press Release [MEMO/09/177](#) gave background to the issue of biodiversity in the EU).

2 April 2009 was the 30th anniversary of the [Birds Directive](#), described as being 'central to the EU's strategy for halting biodiversity loss' (Press Release [IP/09/510](#)).

According to Press Release [IP/09/815](#) of 20 May 2009, the first European Red Lists for amphibians and reptiles showed that 59% of all European amphibians and 42% of reptiles are in decline.

On 13 July 2009 the European Commission published the most comprehensive survey of EU biodiversity, looking at the conservation status of over 1,150 species and 200 habitat types protected under EU law. Spanning 2001-2006, it shows that grasslands, wetlands and coastal habitats face the greatest threats (Press Release [IP/09/1118](#); see also [Habitats Directive reporting](#) page).

The Communication 'Options for an EU vision and target for biodiversity beyond 2010' ([COM\(2010\)4](#)) was adopted by the Commission on 19 January 2010 to mark the International Year of Biodiversity. It was intended to launch a debate between Member States with a view to developing a post-2010 biodiversity policy framework for the EU (see Press Release [IP/10/32](#)).

In March 2010, the [European Red List](#) showed that 9% of butterflies, 11% of beetles that depend on decaying wood, and 14% of dragonflies are threatened with extinction within Europe (see also Press Release [IP/10/283](#)). According to a March 2010 Eurobarometer survey 'Attitudes of Europeans towards the issue of biodiversity', 62% of those surveyed did not know the exact meaning of the term biodiversity or had never heard of it term (see Press Release [IP/10/411](#), [Full survey](#), [Summary](#)).

On 15 March 2010, Environment Ministers adopted a headline target on halting the loss of biodiversity and a vision for the better protection of biodiversity in the EU by 2050 (see Press Release [7522/10](#)).

Launched in June 2010, the [Biodiversity Information System for Europe](#) (BISE) aimed to offer a single source of information about European biodiversity. A [Biodiversity baseline](#) provided facts and figures on the state and trends of the different biodiversity and ecosystem components, thus enabling progress to be measured and monitored (see also Press Release [IP/10/646](#)).

Adopted on 8 October 2010 as [COM\(2010\)548](#) 'The 2010 assessment of implementing the EU Biodiversity Action Plan' confirmed that the EU missed its target of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 (see also Press Release [IP/10/1303](#)). With reference to a post-2010 policy, it found that more progress needed to be made on:

- the integration of biodiversity considerations into other sectoral policies;
- making available the necessary funding;
- filling existing policy gaps.

On 3 May 2011, following a public consultation on a post-2010 EU biodiversity strategy (see Press Release [IP/10/1096](#)), the Commission adopted the Communication 'Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020' ([COM\(2011\)244](#); see also Press Releases [IP/11/526](#) and [MEMO/11/268](#)). The strategy sets out 20 actions, spread over the following six targets:

1. Fully implement the Birds and Habitats Directives
2. Maintain and restore ecosystems and their services
3. Increase the contribution of agriculture and forestry to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity
4. Ensure the sustainable use of fisheries resources
5. Combat invasive alien species
6. Help avert global biodiversity loss

The European Red List published on 22 November 2011 showed that 37% of freshwater fish, 23% of amphibians, 15% of mammals and of dragonflies, and 13% of birds in Europe are threatened (see Press Release [IP/11/1387](#)).

On 20 April 2012, the European Parliament adopted a [Resolution](#) on the '[EU biodiversity strategy to 2020](#)' that firmly regretted the failure of the EU to meet the biodiversity target set in the 2010 strategy and stressed the urgent need for action and to give higher political priority to biodiversity in order to not only meet the targets set for the 2020 strategy but also reduce the loss of biodiversity as failing to do so will incur in overwhelming economic costs for society.

Natura 2000

Described as the centrepiece of EU nature & biodiversity policy, [Natura 2000](#) is an EU-wide network of nature protection areas. Established under the 1992 [Habitats Directive](#), with the aim of ensuring the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats, it now covers almost 18% of the Union's landmass and more than 130,000 km² of its seas (see [Summaries of EU legislation](#) and Press Release [IP/11/18](#)). The initiative comprises Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated by Member States under the Habitats Directive, and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the 1979 [Birds Directive](#).

On 29 October 2010, the Commission published guidelines for wind energy development in protected natural areas, such as those covered by the Natura 2000 network (see Press Release [IP/10/1450](#)).

The Commission announced on 21 November 2011 that the Natura 2000 network had been further extended to cover almost 18% of the EU's land area and almost 4% of its seas. Belgium, Cyprus, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania and the UK were the main countries involved in the expansion (see Press Releases [IP/11/1376](#) and [MEMO/11/806](#)). A further expansion covering all nine of the network's bio-geographical regions – the Alpine, Atlantic, Black Sea, Boreal, Continental, Macaronesian, Mediterranean, Pannonian and Steppic regions – was announced on 26 November 2012. The main countries involved in the expansion were the United Kingdom, Romania, Latvia, Italy, Sweden, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Slovakia, Estonia and Malta. (see Press Release [IP/12/1255](#)).

On 6 May 2013, the Commission adopted the Communication 'Green Infrastructure (GI) – Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital' ([COM\(2013\)249](#); see also Press Release [IP/13/404](#)). The strategy's main objective is to promote and encourage the use of green infrastructure in urban and rural areas of the EU while helping implement the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy.

Climate change and international initiatives

Environmental protection is an international problem and one of the objectives of Community policy on the environment is to promote measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems. The EU played a key role in the development of two major treaties addressing climate change - the [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) and the [Kyoto Protocol](#) on measures to reduce greenhouse emissions which entered into force on 16 February 2005 (see Press Release [MEMO/05/49](#)). This Protocol legally obliges industrialised countries to meet targets with regard to their emissions of greenhouse gases during a 'first commitment period' from 2008 to 2012. The backbone of the Commission's effort to implement the Protocol is the [European Climate Change Programme](#) (ECCP), which was launched in March 2000.

Anticipating the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, the European Union has implemented an Emission Trading Scheme (ETS). This system, which started on 1 January 2005, covers all 25 Member States and is the first multi-national emissions trading scheme in the world. Under the scheme, the Member States have set limits on CO₂ emissions from energy-intensive companies. Companies that emit less than the number of allowances they receive can sell their surplus to other companies. More information can be found in [MEMO/05/84](#).

In December 2007, the Council agreed to include aircraft emissions in the EU emissions trading scheme, something which, said Environment Commissioner Dimas, 'sends an important signal about the EU's determination to put in place concrete measures to

combat climate change' (see Press Release [IP/07/1988](#)). Based on a 2006 proposal ([COM\(2006\)818](#)), the agreement was published as [Directive 2008/101/EC](#), amending Directive 2003/87/EC. Further amendments to the 2003 Directive were made by [Regulation \(EC\) 219/2009](#) of 11 March 2009 and - more significantly - by Directive 2009/29/EC of 23 April 2009, which improved and extended the ETS (see also the Commission's [Emission Trading System](#)) page and [Summaries of EU legislation](#)).

The Kyoto Protocol is only a first step to address the serious threat of climate change. Further action must be taken after 2012, the end of the Kyoto Protocol's 'first commitment period'. In order to prepare for the EU's input in the further development of the global climate change regime 'post 2012', the Commission in February 2005 adopted a communication 'Winning the Battle Against Climate Change' together with a more detailed Staff Working Paper.

The Commission's report recommended that the EU's post-2012 strategy include the following elements:

- Broader international participation in reducing emissions. The EU should continue to lead multilateral efforts to address climate change, but identify incentives for other major emitting countries, including developing countries, to come on board.
- Inclusion of more sectors, notably aviation, maritime transport and forestry since deforestation in some regions significantly contributes to rising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere.
- A push for innovation in the EU to ensure the development and uptake of new climate-friendly technologies and the right decisions on long-term investments into the energy, transport and building infrastructure.
- The continued use of flexible market-based instruments for reducing emissions in the EU and globally, such as the EU emissions trading scheme.
- Adaptation policies in the EU and globally, which require more efforts to identify vulnerabilities and to implement measures to increase resilience.

Further details are available on the Commission's DG Environment page [What is the EU doing on climate change?](#); [MEMO/05/42](#) has detailed background information, statistics etc.; see also [Summaries of EU legislation](#).

The need for joint global efforts to deal with climate change was discussed at the Spring European Council in March 2005 ([Conclusions](#) Part IV Climate Change, page 15) and the March 2005 Environment Council (see Press Release [6693/05](#) and [Preparation of the Spring European Council](#)). An open invitation was extended to other countries to explore together possible strategies for achieving necessary emission reductions in line with limiting the average global temperature rise to 2°C.

The second [European Climate Change Programme](#) (ECCP II) was launched in October 2005, focusing on new cost-effective measures and technologies that will allow the EU to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions in the coming years and to adapt to the climate change effects that are inevitable. The ECCP was initiated in 2000, as a forum for the Commission and stakeholders to discuss and prepare measures to fight climate change.

In May 2006, the Commission launched an awareness raising campaign [You control climate change](#), aimed at persuading individuals to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by making small changes to their daily routines.

On 18 July 2007, the Commission adopted the Communication [COM\(2007\)414](#): 'Addressing the challenge of water scarcity and droughts in the European Union'. A follow-up Report was issued as [COM\(2008\)875](#) of 19 December 2008. A Second Follow-up Report was adopted as [COM\(2010\)228](#) of 18 May 2010 (see also [IP/10/577](#)). A Third Report was adopted on 21 March 2011 as [COM\(2011\)133](#). It focused on:

the building blocks of the future WS&D policy - water efficiency, better planning and adequate implementation instruments – which are key elements of the establishment of a water efficient economy that meets the challenge of the EU 2020 strategy.

A review of WS&D policy is to be published in 2012 (see [Review](#) page).

The EU welcomed the agreement reached at the December 2007 UN climate change conference in Bali, which set the end of 2009 as a deadline for completing negotiations on a post-Kyoto climate regime, for the period beyond 2012 (see Press Release [IP/07/1941](#)).

23 January 2008 saw the publication of the Communication '20 20 by 2020: Europe's climate change opportunity' ([COM\(2008\)30](#)).

A proposal to revise legislation on the protection of the ozone layer was published by the Commission on 1 August 2008 as [COM\(2008\)505](#). On 25 March 2009, the European Parliament voted to support a first reading agreement with the Council (see Press Releases [IP/08/1235](#) and [IP/09/474](#)). A new act was adopted as [Regulation \(EC\) 1005/2009](#) of 16 September 2009 'on substances that deplete the ozone layer'.

4 August 2008 saw the Commission launch a public consultation on the Union's approach to a post-Kyoto global climate change agreement (see Press Release [IP/08/1239](#)). On 11 September 2008, the Commission claimed strong public support for EU targets on climate change following a special Eurobarometer survey of public attitudes to the issue ([IP/08/1314](#); an earlier Eurobarometer poll, released on 13 March 2008, showed more than two-thirds of EU citizens 'prefer policy decisions on the environment to be made at European Union level' - Press Release [IP/08/445](#)).

[MEMO/08/747](#) of 28 November 2008 outlined the Union's response to climate change and included a table showing projected emissions in 2010 for the Member States using a variety of policies and measures.

The European Parliament voted on 17 December 2008 to approve a 'climate and energy package', setting legally binding targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions to 20% below 1990 levels and to increase the share of renewable energy to 20%, both by 2020 (Press Release [IP/08/1998](#)). Formally adopted on 23 April 2009, the package was said to be an important contribution towards an international climate agreement to be reached in Copenhagen (Press Release [IP/09/628](#)).

On 28 January 2009, the Commission set out proposals for a global pact on climate change, to be discussed at the UN climate conference in Copenhagen in December 2009. The proposals contained in 'Towards a comprehensive climate change agreement in Copenhagen' ([COM\(2009\)39](#)) included the creation of an OECD-wide carbon market by 2015 and of innovative international funding sources based on countries' emissions and ability to pay (see Press Releases [IP/09/141](#) and [MEMO/09/34](#)).

On 1 April 2009, the Commission presented the White Paper 'Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action' ([COM\(2009\)147](#); see also Press Releases [IP/09/519](#) and [MEMO/09/145](#)).

Climate change was the theme of the annual Green Week event in June 2009 (see Press Release [IP/09/969](#) and the [Green Week](#) website).

Speaking in Berlin on 6 July 2009, Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas set out some thoughts on tackling climate change during an economic crisis ([SPEECH/09/332](#)).

Also in July 2009, Eurobarometer published a Special Survey on 'Europeans' attitudes towards climate change' which concluded that, despite the perceived seriousness of the issue declining in the face of the economic downturn, 67% of those interviewed described climate change as a very serious problem (see [Survey text](#)).

On 10 September 2009, prior to December's UN climate conference in Copenhagen, the Commission adopted the Communication 'Stepping up international climate finance: A European blueprint for the Copenhagen deal' ([COM\(2009\)475](#)) in which it proposed an increase in international funding to help developing countries combat climate change (see also Press Releases [IP/09/1297](#), [MEMO/09/384](#)).

Adopted on 16 September 2009, [Regulation 1005/2009](#) 'on substances that deplete the ozone layer' lays down rules:

on the production, import, export, placing on the market, use, recovery, recycling, reclamation and destruction of substances that deplete the ozone layer, on the reporting of information related to those substances and on the import, export, placing on the market and use of products and equipment containing or relying on those substances.

In its Communication 'Investing in the Development of Low Carbon Technologies (SET-Plan)' adopted on 7 October 2009 as [COM\(2009\)519](#) (see also Press Releases [IP/09/1431](#), [MEMO/09/437](#)) the Commission concluded:

It is now clear that public and private investment in energy technology development has to increase substantially - starting immediately. An injection of public finance is fully justified to achieve public policy goals and help overcome market failures. Stronger intervention at EU level could be one of the most effective ways to bring forward the desired broad portfolio of technologies.

The Commission launched SETIS, the online Strategic Energy Technologies (SET-Plan) Information System, on 7 October 2009 to provide the latest research results on the status, forecasts and R&D investment figures for low-carbon technologies (see [SETIS website](#) and Press Releases [IP/09/1430](#) and [MEMO/09/436](#)).

On 21 October 2009, the Council adopted [Conclusions](#) on the EU position for the Climate Conference. On 9 November, the Commission set out EU positions and state of play on the proposed climate agreement (Press Release [MEMO/09/493](#)).

In November 2009, the International Energy Agency (IEA) published its [World Energy Outlook 2009](#), confirming that EU energy and climate policies were on the right track, but stressing the need to do more (see also Press Release [IP/09/1709](#) and [WEO](#) pages).

On 9 November 2009, a [European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register](#) (E-PRTR) was launched, giving public access to information on emissions to air, water and land from industrial facilities in Europe. The register includes annual data for 91 substances and covers more than 24,000 facilities in 65 economic activities (see also Press Release [IP/09/1689](#)).

The report 'Progress towards achieving the Kyoto objectives' was adopted on 12 November 2009 as [COM\(2009\)630](#). It looked at progress in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases between 1990 and 2007, projected progress, implementation of the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP) and EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) and the situation in the Candidate Countries.

On 25 November 2009, the European Parliament set out its expectations for the Copenhagen meeting, calling for an ambitious and legally binding agreement that would require emission reduction targets for both developed and developing countries (Press Release [20091123IPR65052](#)).

An overview of EU and Member State action on climate change was given in the 'Fifth National Communication from the European Community under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change' ([COM\(2009\)667](#) of 3 December 2009).

The outcome of the 7-19 December 2009 Climate Change Conference was seen by many as a disappointment, with no agreement on binding targets (see Press Releases [SPEECH/09/588](#) and [20091217IPR66629](#), and also [UNFCCC website](#)). Commenting on the agreement - the Copenhagen Accord - the President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, said:

I will not hide my disappointment regarding the ambition in terms of the binding nature or non-binding nature of the future agreement. On this particular point, the text agreed today falls far short of our expectations.

Quite simply, our level of ambition has not been matched, especially as there was not an agreement on the need to have a legally binding agreement. And this is of course is a matter of concern for us because we believe it is important that we commit globally to the actions that we need to develop to fight climate change.

On 28 January 2010, the Council confirmed that the EU and its Member States were willing to be associated with the Accord (Press Release [5762/10](#)).

On 9 March 2010, the Commission adopted the Communication 'International climate policy post-Copenhagen: Acting now to reinvigorate global action on climate change' ([COM\(2010\)86](#); see also Press Release [IP/10/255](#)). In it, the Commission stated:

Our primary objective remains to reach a robust and legally-binding agreement under the UNFCCC. In order to achieve this, we should first focus on the adoption of a balanced set of concrete, action-oriented decisions in Cancun at the end of 2010. This should be as comprehensive as possible, but given remaining differences among Parties, the EU must be ready to continue the work for the adoption of a legally binding agreement in South Africa in 2011. Up to Copenhagen the pressure on expectations had very useful effects leading many major economies to set domestic targets prior to Copenhagen. Now we must consider a strategy that will keep momentum high without jeopardizing the primary objective.

The Communication 'Analysis of options to move beyond 20% greenhouse gas emission reductions and assessing the risk of carbon leakage' was adopted on 26 May 2010 as [COM\(2010\)265](#). In it, the Commission presented an analysis of the costs, benefits and options for moving beyond the EU's greenhouse gas reduction target for 2020, from 20% below 1990 levels to 30% below (see also Press Releases [IP/10/618](#) and [MEMO/10/215](#)).

[Directive 2010/75/EU](#) of 24 November 2010 'on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control)' consolidated seven separate pieces of legislation, including the Large Combustion Plants Directive (LCPD) and the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) Directive. It was described as a milestone in industrial pollution control in the EU (see Press Releases [IP/10/1477](#) and [15965/10](#)).

The Cancún Climate Change Conference opened on 29 November 2010, with the EU seeking an agreement to pave the way for a legally binding global framework to be adopted as soon as possible (see Press Releases [IP/10/1620](#) and [MEMO/10/627](#)). The

Commission issued a response to the resulting Cancún Agreement (Press Release [IP/10/1699](#)) saying that the package:

represents an important further step on the road to building a comprehensive and legally binding framework for climate action for the period after 2012.

The EU is a party to more than 30 international conventions, including the [UN Convention on Biological Diversity](#), the [Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer](#), and the [Montreal Protocol on Substances which Deplete the Ozone Layer](#) (the Montreal Protocol was 20 years old in September 2007 - see Press Release [IP/07/1334](#); in September 2009, the UN announced that the Protocol had been ratified by all 196 UN members - see Press Release [IP/09/1328](#)). The Commission's [EU@UN](#) website has statements on UN-related issues, including [environment](#).

In February 2011, the European Commission and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) announced a Strategic Cooperation Agreement, covering funding from the Commission to UNEP until 2013 and identifying key areas of joint activities (see Press Release [MEMO/11/111](#)).

A month later, on 8 March 2011, the Commission adopted a Roadmap for transforming the European Union into a competitive low carbon economy by 2050 ([IP/11/272](#)). The main objective of this initiative is to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 80-95% of 1990 levels by 2050.

On 4 October 2011, the Council adopted [Conclusions](#) on climate finance. Ministers welcomed progress made in the implementation of the Cancún Agreements and reiterated the willingness of the EU and its Member States to make progress at the forthcoming UN climate conference in Durban, South Africa. At that conference, held from 28 November to 9 December, agreement was reached on a 'Durban Package', which included the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, the Kyoto Protocol, and a Green Climate Fund for developing countries (see Press Release [MEMO/11/895](#)).

Adopted on 7 October 2011, a Commission Report on progress towards achieving the Kyoto objectives ([COM\(2011\)624](#)) found that the EU-15 were on track to reach the Kyoto target, with total emissions falling for the sixth successive year.

On 8 November 2011 the Council adopted [Conclusions](#) on the Fast Start Finance (FSF) initiative under the Cancún Agreements, to help tackle climate change in developing countries. Ministers underlined:

the necessity to work in a constructive manner towards the identification of a path for scaling up climate finance from 2013 to 2020 in the context of progress made in international negotiations, meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation with a view to reducing global greenhouse gas emissions so as to keep the increase in global average temperature below 2 °C compared to preindustrial levels.

The land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector is not currently part of the Union's commitment to cutting its greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. A proposal to include LULUCF activities alongside the existing regulatory framework was adopted by the Commission on 12 March 2012 as [COM\(2012\)93](#) (see also [COM\(2012\)94](#) and Press Releases [IP/12/234](#) and [MEMO/12/176](#)).

A day later, on 9 November 2011, the IEA released [World Energy Outlook 2011](#). In this edition, the Agency warned that although recent policy was helping to make progress towards a more sustainable energy, much stronger actions were required in order to

accelerate the transformation of the global energy system (see [Press Release](#)). It also made an emphasis on Russia's energy prospects.

On 23 March 2012, the European Environment Agency launched the European Climate Adaptation Platform ([CLIMATE-ADAPT](#)) - a web-based tool intended to help policy-makers develop climate change adaptation measures (see Press Release [IP/12/309](#)).

A year later on, March 2013 saw the holding of the first [European Climate Change Adaptation Conference](#). Held over three days in Hamburg, the initiative counted with the support of the European Commission and brought together world-class scientists and climate adaptation policy makers and practitioners to discuss integrating climate into action. Some of the topics covered during the summit were:

- economics of adaptation
- adaptation strategies and planning
- mainstreaming climate adaptation
- impact and effectiveness studies.

The need for action on climate change and biodiversity loss continues to be one of the main priorities of the Commission and on 16 April 2013, it adopted 'an EU strategy on adaptation to climate change' ([COM\(2013\)216](#); see also [MEMO/13/334](#) and [MEMO 13/335](#)). The strategy focuses on making progress towards combating and adapting to climate change and halting the loss and degradation of ecosystems across Europe while promoting greater coordination and information-sharing between all the Member States. Furthermore, the Commission also adopted a 'Green Paper on insurance in the context of natural and man-made disasters' ([COM\(2013\)213](#) and [IP/12/329](#)). This measure package has three main objectives, which are:

- encouraging Member States to adopt comprehensive adaptation strategies and providing guidelines, technical capacity and funding
- ensuring that Europe's infrastructure is more resilient and the use of insurance against natural and man-made disasters becomes more spread
- further developing the Climate-ADAPT platform as the one source for adaptation information in Europe

On 18 June 2013, the Council adopted [Conclusions](#) on the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change. Ministers welcomed both strategies and although it noted that progress had in fact been made by EU Member States, it couldn't stress enough the need for increased actions within each country and across all levels:

the impacts of climate change such as floods, droughts, heat waves, sea level rise and erosion, can vary considerably between territories and localities across Europe and that therefore most adaptation measures would need to be taken at national, regional and local level, as well as at cross-border level, and should be based on the best available knowledge and practices and the specific circumstances of the Member States.

Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy

Enlargement of the European Union has both increased the number of Member States with a strong interest in environment policy and introduced new neighbours. The perceived benefits to new Member States of implementing the environmental acquis were outlined shortly before the 2004 enlargement, in Press Release [MEMO/04/86](#):

As a result of these legislative and institutional improvements, significant progress in environmental protection has been made by all countries. The state of environment has improved in particular with regard to air and water pollution

reduction: the main air pollutants have declined by 60-80% and toxic metals by 50%, while organic matter pollution of water has decreased by as much as 80%. The percentage of homes and other installations whose effluent is sent to waste water treatment plants doubled in the 1990s.

In addition to publishing a [Handbook for Implementation of EU Environmental Legislation](#) [archived] aimed at relevant officials in national, regional and local government agencies in the candidate and potential candidate countries, in July 2007 the Commission started to issue a series of six [Short Convergence Guides for European Neighbourhood Policy \(ENP\) partners and Russia](#) to provide the countries concerned with information on EU policy and legislation, identify major environmental pressures and challenges, and on the benefits of moving towards the Union's environmental acquis.

On 15 March 2010, the European Commission launched the Environment Partnership of the Black Sea Synergy initiative ([IP/10/279](#)). First proposed in 2007 ([COM\(2007\)160](#); see also [MEMO/10/78](#)) the partnership was set to meet the challenges that the Black Sea region faces and support the efforts of the EU and its partners in the area. In his opening speech, Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik affirmed that although the Black Sea is not considered an EU sea:

it is 'our' sea; it belongs to all of us, it is shared by all its countries and neighbours, by all those who live in the region. We share the Black Sea and its challenges; we must share the responsibility to meet them.

European Environment Agency

In 1990 the [European Environment Agency](#) (EEA) was established to support sustainable development by providing timely and relevant environmental data to policy-makers and the public and to provide the information necessary for the formulation of policies and the assessment of decisions already taken. Currently formed by the 28 European Union Member States, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and six West Balkan cooperating countries, the EEA also collaborates extensively with international organisations such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) but to name a few, and the environmental agencies of the United States of America, Canada and the People's Republic of China.

The Agency makes its information available to the general public through its [publications](#) (see also [EEA Annual Report 2012 and Environmental Statement 2013](#), [EEA Annual Management Plan 2013](#) and [EEA Strategy 2009-2013 Multi-annual Work Programme](#)), and its [website](#). The information provided by the EEA focuses in particular on assessing the current and future state of the environment across Europe and the pressures upon it. The Agency's tasks also include disseminating best practice in environmental protection and technologies, and supporting the European Commission in diffusing information on the results of environmental research.

To accomplish its aim, the EEA collects information, primarily through [EIONET](#) (the European Environmental Information and Observation Network) - a network of 300+ environmental bodies and institutions active in the EEA member countries. It is made up of national focal points, national reference centres and six [Topic Centres](#) which collect data in specific areas: water; air and climate change; biological diversity; resource and waste management; terrestrial environment and data sources. The [European Topic Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production](#) (ETC/SCP) was established in 1997 as the ETC on Waste.

Furthermore, the EEA's [Envirowindows](#) website is dedicated to environmental management systems and best practice and is designed for use by local authorities and businesses.

On July 25 2013, the Agency published '[Towards a green economy in Europe – EU environmental policy targets and objectives 2010-2050](#)'. The report aims to provide a detailed overview of the goals set for the mentioned period in the EU environmental strategy and focuses on ten main areas:

- energy
- greenhouse gas emissions and ozone-depleting substances
- air quality and pollution
- transport sector emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants
- waste
- water
- sustainable consumption and production
- chemicals
- biodiversity
- land use

Information sources in the ESO database

Find updated and further information sources in the ESO database:

[11.1 Environment \[all categories\]](#)

- [Key Source](#)
- [Legislation](#)
- [Policy-making](#)
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- [Periodical article](#)
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- [Background](#)

[11.1.a Sustainable development](#)

[11.1.b Industry and the environment](#)

[11.1.c Economic instruments](#)

[11.1.d European Environment Agency](#)

[11.1.e Chemicals](#)

[11.1.f Precautionary principle](#)

[11.2 Action programmes](#)

[11.3 Environmental assessment](#)

[11.4 Planning and the environment](#)

[11.4.a Rural environment](#)

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[11.5 Transport and the environment](#)

[11.6 Atmospheric pollution](#)

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[11.8 Noise](#)

[11.9 Waste](#)

[11.10 Soil](#)

Further information sources on the internet

- European Commission: DG Environment
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [Environment website](#)
 - [Environmental Integration](#)
 - [Funding Opportunities](#)
 - [Resources](#) (including [Implementation of Community Environmental Legislation](#), [Publications](#), [Statistics](#))
 - [News & Press Release](#)
- European Commission: DG Climate Action
 - [Homepage](#)
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 - Policy areas: [Environment](#)
 - Summaries of EU legislation
 - [Environment](#) (includes factsheets under the headings: [Air pollution](#), [Civil protection](#), [Environment: cooperation with third countries](#), [General provisions](#), [Protection of nature and biodiversity](#), [Noise pollution](#), [Soil protection](#), [Sustainable development](#), [Tackling climate change](#), [Waste management](#), [Water protection and management](#))
- European Commission: DG Communication
 - [RAPID](#) press releases database - [Environment](#) (pre-set search)
 - EU news: [Environment, consumers and health \(EU business\)](#)
 - Eurobarometer: [Homepage](#) (includes public opinion surveys on environment-related issues in the series [Flash Eurobarometer reports](#) and [Eurobarometer Special Surveys](#))
- Legislative and policy making information
 - [Treaty on the functioning of the European Union](#): Article 4, 11, 177, 191-193
 - EUR-Lex: Legislation: [Environment](#)
 - EUR-Lex: Preparatory legislation: [Environment](#)
 - EUR-Lex: Consolidated legislation: [Environment](#)
 - EUR-Lex: Case Law: [Environment](#)
 - EUR-Lex: Summaries of EU Legislation: [Environment](#)
 - European Commission: DG [Environment](#)

- Court of Justice of the European Union: InfoCuria
[Homepage](#): 'at 'Subject-matter' box, click icon at far right to open list of subjects. Select 'Environment' and click 'Enter' to return to main search page. Select dates if required. Hit 'Search' at top or bottom of page.
- European Parliament: Legislative Observatory (OEIL)
[Homepage](#): Carry out a [Search](#): scroll down left-hand menu and expand 'Subject'; then expand 'Community policies', then choose 'Environmental policy' and select appropriate sub-heading (if no menu is shown, click 'OK' at the search box to display it).
- Council of the European Union
 - [Environment Council](#)
 - [Climate Change: Key terms in 23 languages](#)
- European Parliament
 - [Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee](#) (ENVI)
- European Parliament: Fact Sheets
 - Section on [Common policies](#) has Fact Sheets on [Environment policy: general principles](#); [Implementation of European environmental law](#); [Resources Efficiency and waste](#); [Water protection and management](#); [Air and noise pollution](#); [Climate change and the environment](#); [Biodiversity, nature and soil](#); [Sustainable consumption and production](#); [Chemicals](#)
- European Economic and Social Committee
 - [Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment](#) (NAT)
- Committee of the Regions
 - [Commission for Environment, Climate Change and Energy](#) (ENVE)

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August 2013

Original compilation: 2000 (Freda Carroll)

Revised: 2005 (Rohan Bolton), 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012 (Eric Davies)

Hyperlinks checked: November 2016 (Bastien Beauducel)